



February 5, 2002

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Attached is a copy of BellSouth's response to questions posed by Xspedius on the Lafayette SONET ring outage.

Not included in BellSouth's written response to the Lafayette SONET ring outage questions are the following points made verbally by BellSouth executives during our call with them yesterday to discuss your questions:

1. When the transmitter card failed, there was no escalation by BellSouth due to the ring being in simplex condition. They treated the card failure as an outage, which did not affect service and handled it in a routine manner. BellSouth has subsequently told us that they have changed their procedures to:
 - a. Notify the General Manager and Area Managers by immediate page whenever a ring has gone into simplex condition and is vulnerable to failure.
 - b. The Network Reliability Center has been instructed to become more aggressive in their treatment of these failures and to be aware that the ring is vulnerable until the condition is fixed.
2. The network technician who was handed the transmitter card outage ticket did not respond to the trouble in a timely manner. He assumed incorrectly that the outage was not critical. BellSouth has conducted additional training since the Lafayette outage and has disciplined the technician involved.
3. In this particular instance, BellSouth maintenance personnel spent too long trying to find the source of the fiber cut, rather than fixing immediately the reason the ring was already in simplex condition. They have apologized for this error, and claim to have taken steps to remedy – through making the responsible managers and departments immediately aware when a ring goes into simplex condition and through additional training.

Our impression is that before this outage, BellSouth treated error conditions which cause a SONET ring to go into simplex condition as a routine, non-critical condition, that could be repaired routinely in 6 to 8 hours. They incorrectly assumed that the probability of a second error condition on the ring was very low, and that there was no sense of urgency to repair the initial error, and no escalation process or notification to their customers was necessary.

Based on our numerous conversations and several written responses, we now believe that there is a much-heightened level of awareness and response from BellSouth at the time a ring is initially impacted. BellSouth states that the maintenance work, which caused the fiber cut, was not being performed on the ring, but was work within the same cable sheath. .

We do believe that their slow response to the initial card failure should not occur again, and that as a result of this outage and the steps taken by BellSouth to improve their response, that the likelihood of a similar instance should be less in the future.

We hope this helps to explain the outage and steps taken to improve response.

Sincerely,
Arash Zarei

Arash Zarei
President, CoStreet Communications